FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Guidelines for Review of an Assigned Grade or Grading Process

These guidelines deal with the following two forms of appeal:

- Appeals regarding a grade for all or part of a course, and which are based solely on academic judgment
- Appeals concerning the process by which a grade is determined, rather than the grade itself.

The difference is crucial, as only in the second case may an appeal eventually be placed before Senate Committee on Appeals.

Note: Students and instructors are advised to read "Assessment Techniques," "Term Assignments and Debarment from Examinations," "Course Outline Requirements," "Evaluation of Student Achievement," "Student Access to Final Examinations Under Review," "Release of Grades," and "Review of an Assigned Grade," in the Undergraduate Academic Regulations section of the University Calendar.

PROCEDURES

1. Any student wishing clarification about, or who is dissatisfied with, an assigned grade or the process by which a grade has been calculated, either for a portion of or the whole course, should first discuss her/his concern with the instructor. Alternatively, the student may submit a written statement to the instructor that clearly states why the grade does not reflect the academic quality of the work, or the reason(s) for dissatisfaction with the process by which the grade was calculated. This statement should be submitted or the concern discussed within 7 days of the grades being available for that portion of the course in question, or within 21 days of the release of final grades for the course. If the student is satisfied with the result of the instructor's review, no further action is required. If final course grades have been submitted, and the instructor has agreed to change a grade, then an undergraduate grade change form should be completed by the instructor and forwarded, through the Chair/Director, to the Associate Dean, Academic Advising (Tri-Faculty Advising Centre).

2. If the instructor's review confirms the original grade and if the student is still dissatisfied, or if the instructor is not available, then the student should appeal to the Chair/Director, to whom the original written statement must be submitted. If the Chair/Director is the instructor of the course in which the grade or grading process is being appealed, then the Chair/Director shall designate a senior tenured departmental member to handle all further aspects of the appeal and review. If the Chair/Director (or designate) believes the stated grounds for review are reasonable, then she/he will initiate a review of the grade or grading process using the procedures set out below. If the Chair/Director (or designate) does not agree to a review of the grade, then the student has the
right to formally request a review of the assigned grade through Undergraduate Records, as described in the University Calendar, on payment of the required fee.

3. In a review of a grade or grading process, either at the initiative of the Chair/Director or designate or through a formal Undergraduate Records request, the following procedures must be followed:

3.1 The student requesting the grade or grading process review will sign a consent form indicating that she/he understands that the grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same, or that the grading process will be confirmed as appropriate.

3.2

(i) In the case of a review of a grade initiated by the Chair/Director (or designate), the Chair will select a reviewer or reviewing committee of one or more persons to review the assigned grade. The review will then proceed as outlined in sections 3.3 to 5 below;

(ii) In the case of a review forwarded to the department from Undergraduate Records, the Chair/Director or designate will absent him/herself from the reviewing committee;

(iii) In the case of a review of the process by which the grade has been awarded, the review will proceed as outlined in sections 7-11 below;

(iv) No one involved in team teaching or who is a visiting lecturer in a course in which a grade is being appealed, shall review a grade or grading process for that course.

3.3 The original instructor will provide:

(i) all course materials (such as course outlines that describe the grading process, reading lists, statement of goals and expectations);

(ii) a brief explicit statement on how the grade in question was determined and what assessment techniques were used;

(iii) scoring keys or a marking guide or explicit criteria for evaluation of course components or the grade in question;

(iv) the distribution of the marks and of the grades for the course (or component in question);

(v) if possible, a representative sample of graded papers from the course (with identifiers removed).

3.4 The student will provide to the Chair/Director (or designate) all written work submitted for the grade in question. Completed examinations obtained from Undergraduate Records must be directed to the Chair/Director (or designate), not to the reviewer. Students must not rewrite, edit or in any way change their written work prior to review. If there is any question regarding the version of written work submitted for review, the student will be asked to submit the original work.
3.5 The reviewer or review committee will be provided with all the items detailed in 3.3 and 3.4 and will come to a final mark without consultation with the original marker.

3.6 The reviewer or review committee will submit to the Chair/Director (or designate) an independent evaluation of the grade.

4. If the evaluation is different from that of the original instructor, then the Chair/Director (or designate) may consult with the original instructor and reviewer(s) and/or seek further opinion before the final grade is decided. This revised grade will be forwarded to Undergraduate Records and shall become the official grade, regardless of whether it is lower, the same, or higher than the original grade.

5. In some circumstances, or if requested by the student, it may be necessary to seek advice in a grade appeal from outside the unit involved and/or from outside the University. A decision as to the appropriateness of seeking such advice and the procedure to be followed in obtaining it will be made by the Chair/Director (or designate) of the unit involved.

6. The procedures outlined in sections 3.3 - 5 relate only to a review of an assigned grade, and are concerned solely with the exercise of academic judgment. They are the only avenue open to students appealing an assigned grade: there is no further route of appeal.

The procedures to be followed in the case of students' dissatisfaction with and appeal of the process of grading, rather than a grade itself, are outlined below.

7. A student wishing to appeal the process of grading, not the grade itself, should first discuss her/his concern with the instructor. At this stage, the student and instructor are free to decide how the problem may be resolved.

8. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a written appeal to the Chair/Director (or designate if the Chair/Director is the instructor of the course in question). The appeal must clearly state the procedural grounds for believing that a process has been violated, ignored, or applied improperly (see "Assessment Techniques," "Term Assignments and Debarment from Examinations," and "Course Outline Requirements," in the Undergraduate Academic Regulations section of the University Calendar and indicate the remedy sought. This request for a process appeal should be made within 21 days of the alleged violation or of the completion of the course.

9. If the Chair/Director or designate, in consultation with the student and instructor, cannot resolve the issue, then the appeal shall be forwarded to the Associate Dean.

10. The Associate Dean will convene the standing Tri-Faculty Appeal Committee to hear the appeal.

10.1 The Tri-Faculty Appeal Committee will consist of one regular, full-time faculty member (or alternate) from each Faculty. No committee member may be a member of the department in which the appeal is made. The Associate Dean will act as non-voting chair;
(a) The Associate Dean will advise the student to seek the assistance of any persons who may help the student best present her/his case to the committee (Ombudsperson, unit faculty member, fellow students);

(b) The committee members will receive the written appeal prepared for the Chair/Director, and any supplementary material that the student may provide;

(c) The Chair will arrange and announce a time convenient to the committee, student, instructor, and any individual who is asked to speak at the hearing;

(d) The committee may meet briefly in camera to discuss procedural issues before the hearing commences;

(e) The student will first present her/his case and answer questions from the committee; the instructor may respond to the student and to questions asked by the committee; the student may make a final statement and other persons may be asked to speak to the issue;

(f) Following the hearing, the committee will meet in camera to reach a decision. The student may wait to be informed of the decision, but in any case will be notified in writing of the decision.

11. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this Faculty procedure, then she or he may seek further avenues of redress or appeal, as set out in the sections of the University Calendar dealing with "Appeals to the Senate". 